

Sweet Dreams

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Summary: On the eve of their ascent of Apollo Sanctum, the party is, understandably, more than a little nervous. Tyrell, noticing his friends' apprehension, decides to share a few Dream Leaves so that everyone has a good night of sleep before they test fate. A series of short poems then prose describing the dreams of each member of the party

***Chapter 1*: Sweet Dreams**

(Ignoring how much I hate this title) Welp, this is something new that I thought would be cool to try out. Part of me probably is just doing it to see a fic with multiple chapters completed, but the other really likes trying out new things, so here it is. More after the break.

Sweet Dreams

It was late one night at the Ton Fon inn, where the entire party was anxiously awaiting the next day, and their journey to Apollo Sanctum. Some were fairing better than others: Matthew and Karis simply sat off in a corner, conversing lightly and both throwing worried looks over to Sveta, who was anxiously polishing and inspecting her Umbra Gear, ever few moments.

Eoleo was slowly sipping a pint of Ale, staring with such intensity at a painting depicting an ancient wedding that it was small wonder said painting hadn't caught on fire. Amiti and Rief were discussing battle tactics, the older boy clearly trying to keep the younger's mind off of the impending threats they were about to face. Himi sat near them, completely oblivious to her surroundings and muttering chants under her breath.

Viewing this entire sorry scene was Tyrell, who had slowly but surely grown fed up with the somber cloud hanging over the party. He understood why everyone felt down, but still, he didn't see the point in moping about when death could be nearby. In his mind, it was best to live your life to the fullest, especially when facing such dire straights.

Deciding he had to rectify the situation, Tyrell coughed, drawing everyone's attention. "Tyrell... I appreciate your concern, but we are not in the mood for jokes right now," Sveta explained, having heard far too many forced attempts at humor in order to cheer her up.

"No, it's not that," Tyrell replied, standing proudly and looking around the room. "I understand everyone is worried, and I've come to accept that apparently jokes won't get through to you guys. However, I think I can speak for everyone when I say that we all need to let off some steam, and that spending our last night being unable to sleep is no way to prepare for what is facing us."

"He's right," Matthew replied, nodding. "Sadly, I'm not really sure we have a way to negate the stress eating away at us."

"Well..." Tyrell said with a mischievous grin, sticking his hands into his travel sack. "I happen to have roughly twenty pieces of Dream Leaf that I bought when we were in Kolima!" Matthew raised an eyebrow, then grimaced.

"I thought we were a bit short of coins after we left Kolima," He muttered under his breath, shaking his head at Tyrell's antics.

"Anyway, I feel like it would all do us some good to take a Dream Leaf each, and actually get some rest tonight," Tyrell stated, holding out said leaves in his hands.

"That's actually a very good idea," Rief replied almost immediately, getting up and making his way to Tyrell. "I was planning on getting no sleep, and this is a much better alternative. Thanks for the offer, Tyrell."

"No problem!" The Mars Adept replied graciously; it wasn't often that he was complimented for an idea.

"He's right, very clever," Karis added, taking a leaf for herself and flashing a warm smile his way, leading Tyrell to imagine that he knew quite well what he would be dreaming about tonight.

After a few more moments had passed, every member of the party had taken a Dream Leaf, and were eyeing the mystical leaves with fondness. While most of the party had assumed they would turn in late since they had doubted they would find sleep easily, with the Dream Leaves in hand soon the Inn's room emptied, each member of the party being wished goodnight as they departed, until only Himi remained.

Saying one last prayer, the young Miko rose, and, with a soft yawn, made her way to her room, and to her dreams.

So, this one is weird. Which is good, I think. We'll see. This is a collections of short fics accompanied with poems, explaining dreams from each member of the party from Dark Dawn, who I've kind of been neglecting in favor of the Warriors of Vale in regards to stories.

I've been told I'm a good poet (I DON'T agree), and have been meaning to experiment with some other means of writing than prose, although I guess some of my stuff is kind of poetic. So, hopefully this comes out good and doesn't fall flat on my face. I kind of want to keep each one pretty short; either under 500 words or 1,000 words. I'll let the first one determine how long the other ones are, but in general expect them to all be around the same length.

Rather than go with the obvious (in most cases, at least) dreams that each member of the party would have (you can't imagine how tempted I am to make all of these dreams shipping filled), these are sensical dreams for each

character, but also probably not what you might expect. That's kind of the goal, though, to look at the characters in a bit of a different light. Also, while the dreams are, of course, things the characters would like, they aren't necessarily the things they want the most in the world.

I'm posting the first actual poem right now, since this lead in is a little crappy (I couldn't come up with a decent lead in, if anyone has an idea they think would look better I would appreciate hearing it) Next one up should be soon, because they'll all be so short: ideally, I'll get one done a day (ha), but no promises considering how crappy I have been at updating. I'm almost going to avoid writing another author's note till the end, so it's silence from here on out.

Since these little ficlets are dream related, some of them will probably be a little weird, but since Dream Leaves are involved they will be almost completely realistic, with a few light fantasy elements. Thanks for reading!

***Chapter 2*: Aroma**

Aroma

*Lush earth, giving way to tiny sprouts
Little saplings and seeds, vibrant buds
Gaia has leathered these hands
And now they till that very earth*

*To bloom is to flourish
To dance without regard
In a light spring breeze,
And return the embrace of the sun's lips
Whether it's an airy kiss
Or a hard parting of a puckered mouth*

*But you are content
To glance at the brightest petals
For only moments at a time
Much better to caress the growing oak
With yellow, glowing arms
Or tend to the rest of your fledgling garden
And make Gaia smile with wizened pride*

I stand in the center, viewing the green mosaic around me. Lines of potted plants adjoin the shops shelves and display cases, arrays of different flowers, grasses, and general greenery pristinely selected and groomed to greet those who enter. It is a humble little store, in great need of more space (as the plant-life tends to press into the aisles and customers are oft to graze against them), and painstakingly built with only the finest Koliman lumber as well as lumber from Carver's camp.

What more, the entire shop smells of the earth, a fact I remind myself of as I take in a deep breath, be it the hearty richness of dirt or mud, the sweet waft of flowers, or the pleasant odor of grass covered in dew. It is truly a plethora of smells, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Of course, I rarely stay in the building, electing to spend most of my time outdoors and amidst the plants I am currently nurturing, and I proceed there now. A sign permanently resides at the counter of the little building that reads: "Welcome! If you see no one at the counter, I am probably out back, and I invite you to come join me!"

Most people often do, for while the shop is my pride and joy, so is the forest growing behind it, and often it above all else is what draws people to visit my property.

For, while many agriculturalists focus on lining plants in rows and in a small area, I understand how Mother Gaia wishes for her plants to grow, and I spread them as such. The massing of vegetation in small areas will easily wane on the soil as well, making my decision to keep the plants in a wider, forested area even easier.

I keep each area marked with a wooden sign indicating the different flowers and plants, but truth be told, the greatest joy in the forest is to simply wander and let your eyes fall where they may.

Tending to the plants is as simple of a matter as taking two hour walks, and pumping the smallest bit of Psynergy into each of the beings. For I do see them as such; the foliage I give my aid to isn't just pretty to look at and a way to make my living, but breathing and full of vibrancy. I regard much of the plant-life as old friends, especially some of the more ancient trees.

On lazy days, I spend ample time discussing the forest and other matters with some of the trees and plants. While it isn't exactly speech, I can communicate easily enough with the creatures of the earth. I respect them much for their shade, their company, and their understanding in my love of climbing them, something I do frequently.

On the busier ones, where I am greeted by many customers, visitors, or friends, I speak graciously and happily, describing my life's work, and the gardens that I have planted. Many of the plants grow naturally, but many are also of my design; it is all too easy to take a small seedling and plant it in the ground, and after a small pulse of Venus watch it sprout.

Regardless of the events of the day, I always end up in the same place. Near the edge of the forest, there lies a small hill covered in lavender that perfectly overlooks a small creek. After I have washed up and locked the shop, I lay down in this bed of purple, staring at the sunset and then the stars until the moon shines brightly in the sky.

***Chapter 3*: Ocean**

Ocean

*You were always tempted by the sea
But your fingers only felt a bitter chill
Or a harsh snap when they scraped the water
And the wood of your hastily built ships
Always screamed in dismay, finding sinking
Much more suitable than floating*

*So, imagine the amazement of travelling south
Only to find, months later
Yourself upon a boat, in much warmer waters
Being caressed as each wave lifted you
And pulled you back down with grace*

*Even in the darkest shadows
In waters uncharted and in seas hostile
Such a joy it is, to lean back on the deck
And trace the clouds in the sky
With the smiling sun warming you face*

It's not that I didn't like home, it's just that it was so... bonding. My Mom, bless her heart, had already lost the two other important men in her life, and was very hesitant to lose me. And, even ignoring that fact, what did I have to explore and discover? Ice, more ice, slush, and ooh, look, there's a puddle over there! I should watch until it freezes into ice!

Travelling on land is, of course, very satisfying, and I get to see all sorts of places doing so, but it just doesn't compare to the ocean. While the sun hangs high in the sky, I sprawl myself out on the deck, allowing a small break from

manning the wheel, and whistle sailor tunes I've picked up here and there. Whistle badly I might add, but I like to tell myself that I'm getting better.

When I'm on the sea, I feel so free. I used to read so many books, and I still do, but doing so filled me with a creeping sense of melancholy rather than excitement and joy. Odes of men discovering lost civilizations made me sigh in lament, and accounts of great voyages would only garner the feeblest of shrugs. What was the point of paradise if I knew I was never going to get to see it with my own eyes?

With my ship, though, I am truly liberated. Any corner of Weyard is ripe for exploration, is within my sights. That kind of knowledge coupled with that kind of freedom... it's beautiful, but almost overwhelming. I'm just a little boy who dreamed of the world around him and ached not to be tied down. To think I could go from that to owning my own ship, and sailing wherever I choose... like I said, overwhelming.

So many cultures are at my grasp, and I am more than happy to grasp at them. My love for learning will never diminish, but I must admit, even with this ability to go wherever and do whatever I want, sometimes I am most content to simply throw my anchor overboard and lay out in the middle of the ocean.

Even more so than under Mercury's Beacon, while surrounded by my own element I feel truly relaxed and happy. That is why I love the sea so much; wherever I go, I am at home. Even in the most sheering cold, even in the most humid heat, I know water is under me, and it keeps me balanced and pure.

I once imagined settling down, and then maybe taking on an apprentice, becoming much like my teacher, but now I see

that I can help the world in a different way. I hesitate to call myself a bard, but I will be a carrier of knowledge, one who goes across vast distances to spread news and wonders many would never have access to, and hopefully the world is better for it.

I still have many tomes, and will undoubtedly collect more as I go on in my life. And I still would consider building a family, provided I can find a nice girl who is willing to put up with my quirks and lack of heroic attributes, despite my lineage.

But in the end, all I wish to do is sail around on the ocean; every day without it beneath my feet is odd to me now, and I can't imagine actually living on land.

Perhaps someday, I will grow tired of this sea-faring life, and settle down. My home, despite the ruthless cold, holds deep meaning to me, and if my mother ever asked me to stay and give her aid, despite my love for the sea, I would oblige.

And yet, something tells me that I will spent the rest of my days on a canvas of blue, learning something new everyday, and resting in the warm sun when the gentle lull of the ocean calls my eyelids shut.

***Chapter 4*: Sky**

Sky

*The ground was never enough
And gravity was likewise your nemesis
Wingless, you could only stare at the sky
Jumping only to fall and land harshly
And wherever you walked,
Your feet left imprints
Even when you wished to be a ghost
And wander without trace*

*Freedom to you, then, was flight
And the sweat that ran into your eyes,
Already tearing from the ethereal cracks of the wind
Could do little to hinder you
When you finally spurned gravity
And the earth that bore you
Using your arms as wings
And gliding effortlessly into the sunset
Lips pressed gently to the sky*

Perhaps it is in my blood, and it is certainly in my nature, but for most of my life, all I wished for was the ability to fly. My father shares this dream, but trying myself to a machine... it holds no interest to me.

Jupiter runs through my blood, so why couldn't I harness that, and fly without restraint? Because, isn't that the idea of the flight I crave? Freedom?

So... I experimented. My friends laughed at first when I took to jumping off my roof, and then winced as I began to scale

the highest points in our town and leap off with no regard for my body.

To call my first attempts successful would be very, very gracious, but over time, a quick yank to the ground became a slower and more controlled descent, and then that became a small glide, and then a longer one, and then a longer one... until I could last for nearly a mile before I touched the ground.

I didn't stop, and what was the result? Freedom. It's not that I don't love Weyard, and the people that inhabit it... but often I find my mind wandering, and find myself wishing to be utterly alone. Who will bother me in the sky? The sparrows?

The first day I flew, that I really flew... I'll never forget it. Everything clicked, the wing in me took control, and it was as effortless as I'd always imagined. Curving through the clouds and laughing at the simplicity of it all. I had half a mind to drop into Lalivero and claim to be a holy child!

I fly everyday, of course, and each time I can last a bit longer. When I swoop near Passaj, I am elated and lifted by the Zol winds, and at times the natural breeze of the world holds me up, rather than my own Psynergy, as well.

It is elating beyond words... almost too good to be true. The wind caresses my face and dances with my ponytail, and my hands twirl in motion to the current of the air. Often I find myself playing Icarus, just catching myself flying too close to Sol, and while I have no wings to melt, my bright red, sun-burnt face attests to my desire to scrape against the cosmos.

When I'm asked to deliver a letter, or relay information, I shake my head with an apologetic smile; flying for me could

never be mixed with the trivialities of the ground. To chain something so free to the ground, I couldn't bear it.

Of course, I can't help but oblige after a second and third request, but it feels odd. The sky is a canvas, and I do not wish to paint it with the worries of Weyard. No, the skylscapes that smile blue in the morning and sigh with pinks and purples before dusk settles should remain clear and other-worldly.

And so, do I feel out of place?

...At times. I feel undeserving of such a blessing, of such freedom, but far be it for me to complain. Though my form, with its petty problems and foolish concerns, is so tiny, I feel as if they blot out the sky when they cloud my mind. Yet, a minute in the clouds that used to hang above me erases them from my mind.

I pray that this is what life after death is, that when I rejoin my mother, we will sail through the clouds together. And perhaps, someday I will find someone whose weight I am willing to bear, or maybe they will find me. Holding another would be hard, but something about sailing with your love in the sky... what can I say, I'm a romantic!

For now, I am more than content to navigate alone, touching the sky with out-stretched fingers tips, bright shining eyes, and a care-free smile. To be free in a world full of gravity, if only for an hour a day.

***Chapter 5*: Home**

Home

*You just wanted to hold her hand
But your heart barely pushed out waves
When the currents of her own grew still*

*The palace did not lack images of her
But no paint could capture
The sparkling emerald of her eyes*

*In your dreams, or in vague moments of clarity
You can imagine her, on the day
That she lifted you above her head
Before falling into eternal slumber*

*You can just grasp at
Her tender smile, warm and maternal
Twinkling tears dancing down her face
Before the image fades
Leaving you cold and alone*

*And you whisper,
"I just wanted to hold your hand."*

I believe in the power of the heart. So, every day when I awake, I always pray that she has returned. I give the name of the city I was born in when asked what I call home, but that is a lie. Home is where the heart is, and my heart was with her; I was so like her, everyone would say. I would make her so proud.

Every day when I rose from bed, I convinced myself that outside my room she waited, perhaps staring out a window,

or lightly singing a song to herself. Time, and time, and time again I was disappointed, but I never despaired. As foolish as it was, I needed that hope.

And today, I roll off my mattress, flatten my unruly hair, and leave my room, to find someone leaning against the wall, facing away. I don't recognize her at first; perhaps a new servant, or maybe a traveler here to see me.

She turns, now, and though I did not recognize her by her hair, I know her immediately by her sparkling green eyes. She calls my name fondly when she recognizes me, the very image of the man who had destroyed her, her lips letting it fly as if the years of pain and longing had never occurred.

I run to her, slamming against her with all the might of a tidal wave, but she takes it in stride, holding me tight. Tears come quickly, as does sputtering; the stories of my first steps, as relayed by my uncle; the Eclipse, and my role in its ending; how much I missed her, most of all.

Beaming down upon me as an angel would, she brings her lips to my head, and with her hand upon my back leads me through the palace, and out into the daylight. The servants and members of the court stare with wide-eyes, but none can bear to disrupt us, seeing the natural and beautiful dance of a mother healing her child's heart.

When we reach the surface, we lay out upon a patch of grass; for the first time, I feel embarrassment at a man of my age acting as such, but it fades just as quickly as it arises. I have waited my entire life to go home, and now I am there.

We don't speak for hours, but when we do it is her who does so. She whispers in my ear all those words and phrases others have said, but I had longed to hear from her mouth

alone; how proud she is of me; how strong I have become; how grateful she is that I am her son.

Tears flow frequently, and when I speak, I do so freely but with a soft fear that if I say the wrong thing, the world around me will shatter. She can feel it; I can see it in her eyes. I tell her not to blame herself, and that I love her. That I will always love her.

She returns the sentiments, speaking of what we will do now, and what the world holds for us. She asks if I have set my sights on any girl, and I can only blush. My father remains our hidden taboo, which I silently thank her for.

As the sunlight begins to wane, I broach the questions I had avoided when it had shone in the sky's apex: Will she leave me? Her mouth curves sadly, before she places her hand on my heart, saying she will always be with me.

I nod with silent thanks and desperation, shaking quietly as the last rays of the sun die. Knowing sleep will take us soon, and that there is no need to go inside, I ask if I can hold her hand.

She obliges, her warm fingers slipping into mine, and knowing there is nothing else to say, I close my eyes. I never want to wake up.

Not now, when I am finally home.

***Chapter 6*: Nap**

Nap

*Though my likeness is that of dog and cat
I picture myself as the rabbit
Always dashing through fields
Where the grass hangs just above my head
As shadows streak across my face
Moving just too slowly to traverse gaping holes
And falling into one nightmare after another*

*Any escape I fear temporary
Every smile I fear will disappear
All hope I fear lost, time and again*

*So I won't resist, when you lay me down
In your bed of lavender*

*I won't disagree, when you say you will stay
Even though the world says otherwise*

*I won't cry, when you hold me
When you give me the hazy peace
Of your hands petting my scalp
Of your eyes, brighter than Sol*

I'm not familiar with feeling this kind of... comfort. I'm used to indecision and my mind freezing, but in moments of terror, of my eyes darting back and forth through darkness, not in moments of lazy dozing and yawning as my back arches, eyes closed to block the rays of Sol.

My feline tendencies draw me to its glow, though broad daylight has often held a lack of shelter for me. But, now, I

can relax, I suppose. At least, that's what he tells me.

You can be princess another day, he says, his leathery hand parting my tight locks and scratching the top of my head. Today, why not rest? The sun is shining... you're lying in my lap.

He thinks he understands, and while he does, he doesn't. He thinks it is too easy, to forget and to ignore. And... perhaps he is right. At least, when the sun is this bright, and I am curled into him.

At this moment, perhaps I can convince myself that the world has turned from cruel to innocent and cheery as it used to be, from holes in the ground throwing me into twisted fantasies that somehow are true, into a warm field of lavender.

And even if I can't, I don't mind. Even if it fades away tomorrow, I am at peace, now. Listening to him speak about the future; he is a dreamer after all.

We'll run far away, he says, but his running is different. We'll be happy, climbing vast mountains, meeting strange tribes and ancient cultures. Or, we can settle down, live with my people, or live in his hometown.

I only nod with a yawn in response, but I cannot help but smile at his doting. He knows my fears, knows my past, and whatever our future holds, it is our future. Us, together, never separate.

He says my name so sweetly, when we sunbathe, when we lie down to rest. I am not the same in these moments; I feel distant, yet closer than ever. I feel like myself... but younger, not as I am now. Not worn or tattered, but fresh and buoyant.

Well, maybe not buoyant, but certainly content. On cue, he traces his hand across my hair and lands on my ear, stroking softly, and my worries and thoughts go numb.

The hum of insects around us, the weighty smell of gentle, free earth, the light breeze tickling my feet and pushing his scarf off of his chest; all of this I sense, my mind free. Of course, I feel the ear-rub most of all, and it is heavenly.

Smiling Sol has cursed the clouds away, and seems to have hung above us since we first arrived. The idea of rain is so distant, I might blink in confusion if it began to sprinkle.

All is calm, all is soft, all is effortless and most of all, all is warm. Particularly him. Slight guilt always crosses me... we should be...

Isn't this perfect? He whispers the moment my concerns erupt, and I can only giggle at his impeccable timing and my constant brooding.

He begins to sing while staring into my eyes, his voice gloriously off key, his twinkling blues and soft smile letting me know he is well aware of that fact. I wrap tightly into him, holding back laughter as the Prelude is massacred before my very ears.

If he can make that cursed hymn a source of my laughter, why can he not push the clouds away and lull me into a warm sleep? I wish to thank him, but his smile lets me know that no thanks is needed, and I oblige. My eyes sink into themselves as the warmth sinks into me, and I sink into peace.